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THE USE OF SURPLUS FARM PRODUCTS - FLOUR

An interview between Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and John C. Baker, Radio Service, broadcast Tuesday, June 27, 1939, in the Department of Agriculture Period, National Farm and Home Hour.

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

JOHN BAKER:

And now Ruth Van Deman bringing us information again on another of the eight foods officially declared in surplus. This time it's flour--wheat flour.

There are two kinds of wheat flour on this list of foods in surplus--white patent flour and whole wheat, or graham, flour. Ruth, does that mean you're going to bake us two kinds of bread today?

RUTH VAN DEMAN:

You're the baker, John.

BAKER:

Ouch! Just for that I should make you eat a batch of my sour dough.

VAN DEMAN:

Then you do know how to make bread.

BAKER:

I've stirred up something with flour on camping trips. I don't suppose you'd call it bread - - -

VAN DEMAN:

Why not?---More bread's baked by men than women these days. What kind of flour did you use?

BAKER:

I don't know---just flour.

VAN DEMAN:

But a second ago you were talking about the two kinds of flour on this list of surplus commodities---white flour and whole-wheat flour.

BAKER:

It was white flour. We used it for everything---pancakes---gravy---rolled the fish in it before we fried them, after we ran out of corn meal - - -

VAN DEMAN:

A truly all-purpose flour.

BAKER:

Absolutely. I even dusted myself with it when I got a bad sunburn.

VAN DEMAN:

Um hum---forgot your talcum powder.

BAKER:

That's what.

(over)

VAN DEMAN:

Didn't you have a nice paste on your back?

BAKER:

I don't remember---I guess I slept it off.

VAN DEMAN:

A good deal of the flour on the market is general-purpose flour---really labeled that. It's a blend of hard wheat and soft wheat. That gives a moderate amount of gluten---enough for yeast bread and not too much for biscuits and muffins.

John, the next time you go on one of these camping trips, I'm going to give you a copy of our baking bulletin---"Home-made bread, cake, and pastry".

BAKER:

No, I don't want to know too much. I might have to do all the cooking.

VAN DEMAN:

Well, I recommend it for home consumption then. It has all the answers about flour and bread---how to make bread with hard-wheat flour and with soft-wheat flour. You really need to know your flour if you're going to make nice light bread.

BAKER:

Can you use whole-wheat flour and white flour just the same way?

VAN DEMAN:

Not exactly... You have to handle them a little differently. The whole-wheat flour has less baking strength than white flour. The dough ferments more quickly. And it's softer and more moist. If you handle it right though, you can get a very nice light loaf from whole-wheat flour.

BAKER:

Whole-wheat bread has more flavor.

VAN DEMAN:

And more of the food value of the wheat grain. When you discard the germ and the bran, you lose practically all of the minerals and vitamins from wheat.

BAKER:

But the patent flour keeps better.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, it's like so many other things, what you lose in one way you gain in another. And of course if you're eating a well-balanced diet in general---plenty of milk, and eggs, and fresh fruits and vegetables---you can easily make up for the minerals and vitamins in the wheat kernel.

BAKER:

It's when you are on a very restricted diet then that you need to worry about the color of the bread---light or dark.

VAN DEMAN:

That seems to be the opinion of the nutrition people---those who've given the matter careful study. But to be on the safe side, they say use both kinds of bread---some white, some whole grain.

BAKER:

I like to eat different kinds of bread. They don't all taste alike. I want variety.

VAN DEMAN:

Again, may I draw to your attention, Mr. Baker, Farmers' Bulletin 1775 - - -

BAKER:

Yes, yes---"Home-made Bread, Cake, and Pastry". I've got the title now.

VAN DEMAN:

It has a whole section on wheat-bread variations. There's a recipe for raisin bread. Or you can use other dried fruits---prunes---dates---dried apricots.

And there are directions for nut bread and cheese bread.

BAKER:

Cheese bread?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes sir, cheese bread---grated cheddar cheese added to the bread dough. It makes delicious toast.

BAKER:

I should think it would be good in sandwiches---new way to get the ham and cheese together.

VAN DEMAN:

None better. And do you like old-fashioned salt-rising bread?

BAKER:

Haven't tasted any in so long I've almost forgotten.

VAN DEMAN:

It has flavor too---it's own particular flavor. At our house we think salt-rising bread toasted for breakfast is just about right.

BAKER:

Isn't that a bread made without any yeast?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, you make a starter with corn meal and milk, and a little sugar and salt, and let that ferment. That forms the gas that leavens the dough and makes the bread light. Something like your sour dough in camp.

BAKER:

Don't take me too literally on that.

VAN DEMAN:

Certainly, I'm expecting a demonstration. When I visit your camp - - -

BAKER:

That's a day the fish will be biting. Somebody else will be chief cook and bottle washer.

By the way, if you'd like you'll find the Dutch oven by the fireplace.

VAN DEMAN:

I never baked biscuits in a Dutch oven. It would be fun to try - - -

BAKER:

Be sure you bring that baking bulletin with all those good recipes.

VAN DEMAN:

I wouldn't think of coming without it.

BAKER:

And thank you for coming today, with these pointers about wheat flour and home-made bread.

And now to repeat the title of the bulletin - - -.

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